

High-level Round Table 2

Addressing progress and assessing gaps and challenges in the implementation of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and its Programme of Action, and giving momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Vahan Kostanyan, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address this High-level Round Table, dedicated to the interlinkages between the Copenhagen Declaration and Its Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Taking this opportunity I would like to thank the Government of Qatar for excellent organization of the Summit and its traditional hospitality.

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development was a historic milestone. It placed people at the centre of development and called upon us to eradicate poverty, achieve full and productive employment, and foster social integration. Thirty years later, these principles remain not only relevant, but essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past decades, the world has witnessed remarkable progress in reducing poverty and expanding access to quality, affordable and inclusive education, healthcare and social protection. Yet, inequalities - within and among nations - persist and, in some cases, have deepened. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, armed conflicts and humanitarian crises have had a negative impact the hard-won gains and heightened people's sense of insecurity.

As a landlocked developing country Armenia understands these challenges acutely. We have made significant efforts to strengthen social protection systems, promote quality and inclusive education and universal healthcare, promote gender equality and ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and refugees. We continue to invest in youth empowerment, digital literacy and innovation as drivers of decent work and social mobility.

This year, Armenia launched a new social protection assessment system that directly targets extreme poverty. For the first time, entitlement to support is determined primarily by disposable income, ensuring that every person's basic food needs are fully covered. Importantly, we link social assistance with participation in active labor market programs, supporting dignified employment and empowerment over dependency.

We are also implementing humanitarian and community-based services - including targeted food provision and emergency social support -to protect those facing hardship. However, we recognize that social development requires more than safety nets. Peace, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights are key prerequisites for social equity, enabling efficient delivery of social protection services.

Dear colleagues,

This couldn't be done without our international partners. We continue to believe in international solidarity - through enhanced development cooperation, capacity building and investment in human capital. Social objectives must be fully integrated into economic and climate policies to ensure a just and inclusive transition that leaves no one behind.

Thank you.